

VZCZCXRO2650

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DE RUEHTC #0899/01 1311505
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 111505Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9142
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE 0096
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE 0101
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 2878
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RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE 0479
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 4273

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 THE HAGUE 000899

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STATE FOR EUR/UBI (RREITER)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EUN](#) [ETRD](#) [KPAL](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/EU: MAY 14-15 PRE-GAERC DEMARCHE

REF: STATE 60948

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ACCORDINGLY.

1. (SBU) Summary. The GONL remains concerned about Sudan and will support EU sanctions if no UN sanctions are forthcoming. The Dutch are also concerned about progress on EU-Russia cooperation. They support an EU role in the International Compact with Iraq and Ahtisaari's recommendations for Kosovo. The Dutch also support the EU Code of Conduct for development assistance but are concerned about the progress of Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations with Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific regions. The Dutch support existing targets for military rapid response over creation of new capacity. On the EU constitution, the Dutch prefer reform of the Nice Treaty but do not see hope unless the German Presidency makes significant progress. End Summary.

2. (SBU) Poloff delivered reftel points May 5 to Rochus Pronk, Deputy European Correspondent, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Econoff subsequently met Pronk and Jan Klugkist of MFA's European Integration Department to discuss Dutch reactions.

Sudan: No GAERC Conclusions Expected

3. (SBU) Pronk said the Dutch do not expect GAERC to adopt conclusions on Sudan during the upcoming meeting. Pronk said while the Dutch are willing to allow a little more time for the political process, their patience is "running out." If the UN fails to adopt sanctions, then GONL favors EU sanctions, Pronk said. Pronk added Minister for Development Cooperation Bert Koenders was on travel in Sudan, and that Minister for Foreign Affairs Maxime Verhagen would brief the GAERC on the visit.

Somalia: No Further Developments

4. (SBU) Pronk noted there were no "real" developments since the last GAERC meeting, and that no significant Council conclusions were expected. GONL, Pronk said, remains concerned and continues to support EU efforts to find a

political solution. Pronk also reaffirmed GONL's support to the AU mission in Somalia.

Russia-EU Summit: Concern over New Framework Delay

¶5. (SBU) There will be a preparatory session for the May 17-18 summit, Pronk said. During this session, members will discuss summit deliverables in the areas of economics and the rule of law, external security, education and culture, and regional subjects such as Kosovo, Iran, and Middle East peace.

¶6. (SBU) GONL, Pronk said, will express concern that the new framework for EU-Russia cooperation has not started. The mandate for a new agreement with Russia does "not look good," he added, given the meat dispute between Russia and Poland. He also said GONL hopes the recent rioting by ethnic Russians in Estonia will not affect the summit, although it will effect the bilateral relationship between those two countries.

Iran: Solana-Larijani Meeting Not Productive

¶7. (SBU) EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy and Secretary General for the Council of the EU Javier Solana will debrief GAERC on his April 25 meeting with Iranian National Security Council Chief Ali Larijani, Pronk said, and added "nothing productive" came out of the meeting. Pronk noted GONL will continue to push for a diplomatic solution.

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Iraq: GAERC to Welcome Outcome from May 3-4 Meetings

¶8. (SBU) Pronk said the GAERC would adopt a conclusion welcoming the outcome of the May 3-4 International Compact with Iraq (ICI) signing and Neighbors Meetings in Egypt. GONL supports an active EU Presidency and Commission role in ICI, Pronk said.

Afghanistan: ESDP Mission to Start

¶9. (SBU) An ESDP mission is "in the making," Pronk said. He added police reform is critical to increasing stability and that the Council would discuss how to set up the mission. The current plan, Pronk said, is to start June 15 and reach full strength by November 15. "Third countries" are also supporting the effort, Pronk added.

Middle East: Foreign Minister Verhagen to Visit Region

¶10. (SBU) Verhagen will visit the Middle East June 13-14, where he will meet with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Foreign Minister Abu Amr, Pronk said. Pronk said he did not expect any major developments in either the GAERC or those meetings. The GONL supports the Arab League's Peace Initiative, Pronk added.

Balkans: Serbia and Kosovo Developments

¶11. (SBU) Pronk said the GAERC would adopt a conclusion welcoming meetings with the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe. The Council was also considering further conclusions regarding Serbia and Kosovo.

¶12. (SBU) On Kosovo, Pronk said GONL supported Ahtisaari's recommendations on the status of Kosovo and that a discussion of the April 24-29 Security Council trip to Kosovo would be on GAERC's agenda. Pronk added the GONL intended to contribute 40-60 police to the ESDP mission and would discuss further cooperation with NATO.

¶13. (SBU) Pronk noted GAERC would discuss, over lunch, the 5 Bulgarian nurses held in Libya. He said the nurses, and a Palestinian assistant, are in prison under "difficult circumstances" and that the EU Commission is leading negotiations to secure their freedom. A report on the "state of play" would be provided during the GAERC, Pronk added.

Defense: No New Rapid Response Capacity

¶14. (SBU) The GAERC, Pronk said, will discuss military capacity and efforts to achieve the 2010 Headline Goal. Meanwhile, he added, Germany -- together with future Presidency countries Portugal, and Slovenia -- will be examining military rapid response. The GONL, Pronk said, supports this exam but prefers reaching targets set forth in the existing rapid response framework rather than the creation of new capacity.

¶15. (SBU) Pronk said the GAERC will adopt a conclusion on improving crisis management. The Dutch support strengthening and deepening the relationship between the EU and UN, he said. The EU's mission to reform the Congolese army and security sector will be extended and expanded from Kinshasa to all of Congo, Pronk said.

Development: EPAs, Code of Conduct, and the UN Aid Target

¶16. (SBU) Klugkist said the Commission is currently negotiating Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with 6 African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) regions to replace the current regime -- established under the Contonou agreement

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and Lome Convention -- that is not WTO-compliant. The GONL, Klugkist said, supports EPAs that are development friendly, allow "space" for national development policies, and offer the ACP more benefits than received by the EU. This must be accomplished by January 1 2008, Klugkist said, when the WTO waiver expires. The GONL parliament, he added, is concerned the EPAs will not be completed on schedule and is recommending a post summer assessment on the feasibility of meeting the January 1 deadline. Klugkist said Africa has the greatest challenges, as two regions -- Central and Eastern Africa -- have little to no experience with the regional integration required for an EPA.

¶17. (SBU) The GONL supports the EU Code of Conduct for development assistance, Klugkist said, because the program provides guidelines on how to execute development programs in-country and encourages cooperation and a "division of labor" between donor countries. For example, it recommends limiting EU donors to no more than 3 per sector and the delegation of aid funds to a "leading donor" to leverage strengths and reduce coordination costs. This is part of the Paris Agreement, he added, and a good example of how the EU is taking steps toward improving the quality of aid.

¶18. (SBU) On aid levels, Klugkist said the EU agreed to budget 0.7 percent of GNP to aid by 2017, with an interim target of 0.42 percent by 2006. He noted the EU has achieved this target, and is on track to achieve its 2010 interim target. GONL is already over the final target, and is currently contributing over 0.8 percent, Klugkist added, and said the Dutch support discussions to develop a plan beyond ¶2017.

¶19. (SBU) Klugkist said there would be a presentation on the "state of play" on an EU-Africa strategy at the GAERC meeting. The EU, he added, is looking for an agreement with Africa by the Lisbon Summit at the end of 2007.

EU Constitution: Dutch Support Reform of the Nice Treaty

¶20. (SBU) Regarding the future path of the EU Constitution, Pronk said the GONL would prefer a reform of the Nice Treaty.

If there is "not enough" agreement under the German Presidency, he added, Portugal would "not be able to" continue the Constitutional discussion.

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